

SENATE BILL 1300

By Yarbro

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
relative to student journalism.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act is known and may be cited as the "Good News for Students Act."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 24, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) A student journalist has the right to exercise freedom of speech and freedom of the press in institution-sponsored student media, including determining the news and opinion content of institution-sponsored student media, regardless of whether the media is supported financially by the governing board of the institution, supported through the use of campus facilities, or produced in conjunction with a course in which the student is enrolled.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) and § 49-7-2405, a student journalist does not have the right to exercise freedom of speech or freedom of the press in institution-sponsored student media when the content of the media:

- (1) Is libelous or slanderous;
- (2) Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
- (3) Violates federal or state law;
- (4) Incites students in a manner that creates a clear and present danger of the commission of an unlawful act or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the institution; or

(5) Is not protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or the Constitution of Tennessee, Article I, § 19.

(c) A public institution of higher education shall not dismiss, suspend, discipline, reassign, or transfer a student media adviser for:

(1) Taking reasonable and appropriate action to protect a student journalist who engages in conduct that is protected under subsection (a); or

(2) Refusing to infringe on conduct by a student journalist that is protected under subsection (a).

(d) As used in this section:

(1) "Institution-sponsored student media" means any material that is prepared, substantially written, published, or broadcast by a student journalist at a public institution of higher education under the direction of a student media adviser and distributed or generally made available to members of the student body. "Institution-sponsored student media" does not include any media intended for distribution or transmission solely in the course in which the media is produced;

(2) "Student journalist" means a student enrolled at a public institution of higher education who gathers, compiles, writes, edits, photographs, records, or prepares information for inclusion in institution-sponsored student media; and

(3) "Student media adviser" means an employee of a public institution of higher education who is appointed, designated, or employed to supervise or provide instruction relating to institution-sponsored student media.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.